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How Sony lost the Steve Jobs movie: The inside story from the hacked emails

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IMAGE: JUSTIN SULLIVAN/GETTY IMAGES



BY [CHRISTINA WARREN](#) DEC 11, 2014

A major motion picture about [Steve Jobs](#) was inevitable. Even before the Apple cofounder and CEO's death in 2011, Jobs was a figure of almost unparalleled universal interest.

Apple, after all, was one of the biggest companies in the world, and for most regular people, Jobs was Apple. Perhaps not since Walt Disney had a company been so associated with its CEO.

SEE ALSO: [Steve Jobs Emails Show How to Win a Hard-Nosed Negotiation](#)

The reverence for Jobs only grew after his death. Countless books about Apple and Jobs had been published before 2011, but Walter Isaacson's officially sanctioned biography, *Steve Jobs*, had unprecedented access to the man himself. Slated for release just weeks after Jobs' death, the book would go on to be an international bestseller.

It wasn't surprising when Sony was the studio to snap up a film adaptation of the book. Hot off of the success of *The Social Network*, *Steve Jobs* was seemingly the ideal follow-up. A similar

creative team, including screenwriter Aaron Sorkin and producer Scott Rudin, was assembled. Talk that David Fincher would direct began almost immediately.

It seemed perfect. Certainly much more ideal than another Jobs film, the smaller, Joshua Michael Stern-directed film starring Ashton Kutcher as Jobs that went into production in 2012. That movie debuted in 2013 to middling reviews, but for Apple fans the promise was that the next film, the *real* Steve Jobs movie, would be great.

Now, more than three years after acquiring the film rights to Isaacson's book, Sony Pictures is no longer associated with the project. Instead, it was sold to Universal.

How did this happen?

How did Sony screw up such a seemingly sure thing as the official adaptation of Steve Jobs' biography?

How did Sony screw up such a seemingly sure thing as the official adaptation of Steve Jobs' biography? Most of the time, the real story behind these kinds of Hollywood decisions goes untold for months or years until after the dust has settled.

But just a day after Sony officially let go of its interest in the Steve Jobs film and sold it off to Universal, something unprecedented happened: Sony Pictures was hacked.

It was arguably the biggest — and worst — hack in corporate history, with hundreds of thousands of documents (including complete copies of unreleased movies such as *Annie* and *Fury*) captured and subsequently released by cyber criminals.

Within those hacks was the corporate email inbox of Sony Pictures co-chairman Amy Pascal. And within those emails is the story of how the *Steve Jobs* project disintegrated at Sony.

From Pascal's inbox, we get a rare glimpse at what happens within the walls of a struggling film studio — one hampered by indecisiveness and frightened to take on projects that might be too risky and have too little impact.

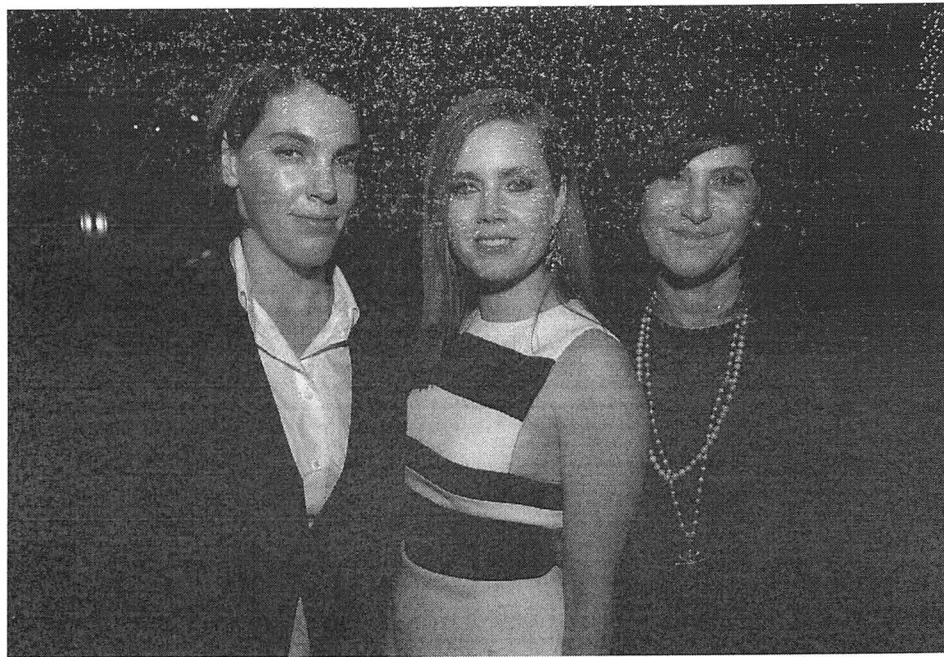
From the outside looking in, the project was a dynamo, with actors, directors and producers dying to get in on the action. But once it came time to sign on the dotted line, securing talent and financing became an insurmountable obstacle for Sony, one that would ultimately doom the project.

For Pascal, the Jobs project was difficult, but it still felt important. It felt worth fighting for. In an email sent just after the project was sold to another studio, she laid bare the tragedy that the project wouldn't be happening at Sony:

"I feel like i just gave away a seminal movie, like *Citizen Kane* for our time.... I already think I may have made one of the worst decisions of my career."

(Editors' note: The emails are presented verbatim, including spelling mistakes.)

The project



Producer Megan Ellison, actress Amy Adams and Amy Pascal, co-chairman of Sony Pictures.

IMAGE: KEVIN WINTER/GETTY IMAGES

Sony jumped on the *Steve Jobs* project early. Walter Isaacson's biography wasn't even on bookshelves before the studio optioned the book in October 2011.

Almost immediately, rumors began swirling that the studio wanted Aaron Sorkin — fresh off his Oscar win for *The Social Network* — to adapt the book into a screenplay.

Sorkin officially signed on in May 2012. At the time, Sony's co-chairman Amy Pascal was quoted as saying, "There is no writer working in Hollywood today who is more capable of capturing such an extraordinary life for the screen than Aaron Sorkin; in his hands, we're confident that the film will be everything that Jobs himself was: captivating, entertaining, and polarizing."

Scott Rudin (who also worked with Sony on *The Social Network* and *Moneyball*) and Mark Gordon were attached to produce the project.

The high-profile nature of Jobs and the book meant the project was subject to rumors and speculation almost immediately. The success of *The Social Network* and the allure of Steve Jobs as a figure meant that this had the potential to be an international hit for Sony and its partners.

According to production schedules seen by *Mashable*, the plan at the end of 2013 was for the project to be produced for either fall or Christmas 2015 or into 2016, depending on the budget, director and readiness of the script.

The script

Sorkin was hired to write his script for *Steve Jobs* (later known as *Jobs* internally at Sony) in May 2012.

While waiting for a script from Sorkin, executives at Sony, including Pascal, president of Sony Pictures Motion Picture group Doug Belgrad, and Columbia Pictures presidents Michael De Luca and Hannah Minghella were already discussing potential names for directors and leads in the project.



Screenwriter Aaron Sorkin.

IMAGE: FRAZER HARRISON/GETTY IMAGES FOR BAFTA LA

Leonardo DiCaprio's agent was eager for the actor to read the script and the actor was clearly an early favorite for the role for the studio and most of the creatives involved.

According to emails reviewed by *Mashable*, Sorkin delivered his first draft of the script to the studio in early February 2014, and it was well-received by the higher-ups at Sony.

An email from Belgrad to Sony CEO Michael Lynton and Pascal summed it up best:

Turned out pretty amazing.

I love it.

Can't wait to figure out how to do it.

After reading the script, Pascal emailed notes to herself from Sorkin's first draft.

"I KNOW WE WANT A N ACTOR TOUR DE FORCE BU THE EARLY STUFF IS SO GREAT"

In an email to Elizabeth Cantillion and others, she added a few initial reactions:

jobs script is on all your pix

its long

its great

its not tsn

but it will be

Courting Fincher

Less than 48 hours after the first draft of the script arrived, Rudin, the producer, was busy working with executives at Sony to try to figure out a director for the project.

David Fincher (who directed Sony's Rudin-produced, Sorkin-penned *The Social Network*), was an early favorite of Rudin's.

The executives at Sony seemed less sure, more open to trying to open the film up to other directors.

In an email exchange with Rudin, Pascal expressed her concerns about going after Fincher for the job.

Rudin:

"Who do you want over Fincher?"

Pascal:

"I don't know but going with him has its challenges and I think we need to talk about it plus this movie has to have genuine emotional depth"

As of Feb. 18, 2014, the short list for director candidates within Sony were:

Danny Boyle

David Fincher

Paul Greengrass

Spike Jonze

Phil Lord and Christopher Miller

Alexander Payne

Steven Soderbergh

Robert Zemeckis

This list can be considered an "ideal candidates" list and was likely not exhaustive or complete.

David Fincher read the script the third week of February 2014. On Feb. 23, he emailed Sorkin saying,

"YES — JOBS — IT'S GREAT, not good, GREAT..."

What do YOU wanna do?"

Fincher followed up with an email of notes to Pascal, Rudin and Sorkin.

Subject: JOBS

Content:

Is great.

It's a play, but a really quicksilver, cinematic one.

I would think you would want to cast and rehearse very carefully (couple months)

Shoot very quickly (4 or 5 weeks — 8 days per ACT??)

The venues would be easy (we could probably find them all in town)

Editing is where we would spend time.

Can SONY market a ONE MAN SHOW(?)

Can you guys make the LENNY of it all, *the MUST SEE?*

This was forwarded to Lynton.

Some of the content in the emails quickly leaked to the press. Sony was able to hold off reporting for a few days, but on Feb. 26, 2014, Pascal finally consented to leak the story to *The Hollywood Reporter*.

In an email with Sony's communication team, Pascal wrote:

"At this point give it to the reporter with no finger prints and fuck variety but there is nothing to say except David read the script and I don't want it to say Rudin is talking with David and start a big problem with mark"

The story quickly spread to *Variety*, *Deadline* and international media outlets.

Fincher sent Pascal an email with a link to *Variety*'s email and a "WTF?" subject line. "You have serious issues *internally...*"

At the same time, Rudin and Pascal were dealing with the fallout from the Fincher discussions on another project the two were trying to work on together, Angelina Jolie's version of *Cleopatra*.

Cleopatra has been a passion project for Jolie for years and with a script from Eric Roth, the film seemed closer to potentially entering production. Jolie was interested in having Fincher direct the project when she found out that he was in talks to do the *Jobs* project instead.

Pascal wanted to diffuse the situation, but Rudin was unswayed. In emails that have been widely reported by *Defamer* and others, Rudin raged against Pascal and called Jolie a "a minimally talented spoiled brat who thought nothing of shoving this off her plate for eighteen months so she could go direct a movie."

But the *Cleopatra* distraction ended up not mattering in the end. Based on email chains within executives at Sony, discussions with Fincher stalled before they got off the ground. Although the director seemed interested in the material, Sony was unwilling to sign him unless he was willing to cut his fee.

Fincher wanted his standard fee of \$10 million, control over marketing and a \$45 million budget for the film. Because the film is structured in three acts, similar to a play, and is almost all interior shots, executives at Sony as well as producer Rudin were convinced the budget should be lower, and were unwilling to meet Fincher's demands.

In an email conversation in late March 2014 with Pascal, Rudin and co-CEO of William Morris Endeavor Ari Emanuel, Sorkin made an impassioned case for trying to make a deal work with Fincher. "I do not know why [Fincher]'s like this (anymore than I know why Steve Jobs was like Steve Jobs) and I don't want this movie to be a bitter drink for the people at the top because you all have other things you can do and you'll just walk away," Sorkin wrote.

"But we're looking at a home run pitch coming at us. The right director wants to do this and wants to do it now. I just ask that before you throw your hands up you make sure you've exhausted every option and that includes letting him save some face."

Rudin's reply:

"You don't think \$40m to shoot three scenes is enough? Do YOU want every control given to him, including the entire marketing campaign? This is the director who refused to put the girl with the dragon tattoo in the ads for THE GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO."

In a reply, Sorkin still held out hope that there could be a middle ground where everyone was happy. Still, he conceded that he'd be uncomfortable with Fincher having marketing control because

"There's always the risk that the billboards will say, 'Anyone who doesn't see this movie is an asshole.'"

"There's always the risk that the billboards will say, 'Anyone who doesn't see this movie is an asshole.'"

Moreover, despite the strong sales of the *Steve Jobs* book, internal models from within Sony indicated that the worldwide box office for the film might only track at \$100 million (though some remained optimistic of a \$150 million worldwide haul).

Although Sony had great success with Fincher on *The Social Network*, his adaptation for the studio of *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo* was a massive financial failure.

There is a sense in the emails that this was omnipresent in the minds of the studio heads (remember, this is in late March 2014, long before Fincher's *Gone Girl* came out and was a hit at the box office).

By April 9, 2014, the Fincher deal was off the table. The news broke a few days later with both sides trying to spin things to their own liking.

It turns out, the trade reports that it was all about money were basically true.

Finding Danny Boyle



Director Danny Boyle.

IMAGE: CARLOS ALVAREZ/GETTY IMAGES

After the Fincher deal evaporated, the studio and producers continued to pursue other directors. Going back to the drawing board for directors, familiar names once again popped up, including Danny Boyle. By April 21, 2014, Sony and Scott Rudin were already in talks with Boyle.

The Hollywood Reporter had the news — as well as the fact that Leonardo DiCaprio was still the leading contender to take the lead — almost instantly.

By the end of April, Boyle's deal to direct was complete.

The talent

From the beginning, Leonardo DiCaprio was the studio's ideal pick to play Jobs.

From the beginning, Leonardo DiCaprio was the studio's ideal pick to play Jobs. His star power and appeal with international audiences made him a strong choice.

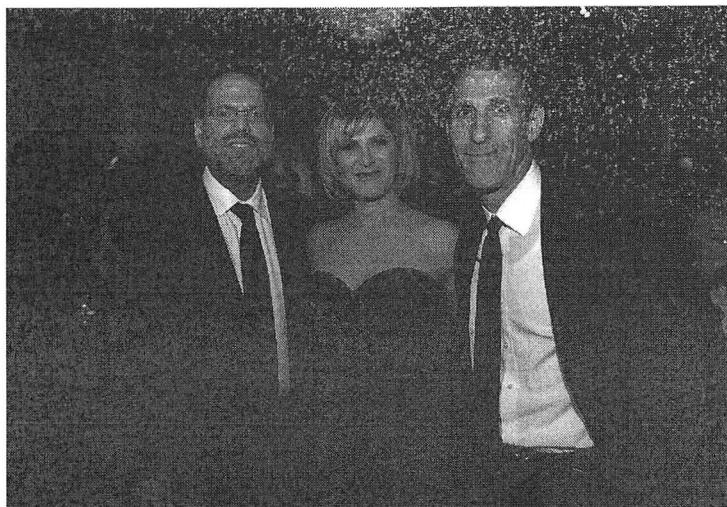
DiCaprio's representative Rick Yorn expressed interest in getting the script as early as January 2014. As talks got underway, the biggest blocker seemed to be not money, but timing. Negotiations with DiCaprio stretched into September 2014 before finally collapsing before any deal could be made. As of Sept. 21, DiCaprio seemed to be completely off the project.

As word of DiCaprio's departure spread around Hollywood, talent agents for practically every working star in Hollywood began to approach Sony executives about their clients' interest in playing Jobs. Representatives for Mark Ruffalo, James Franco, Eddie Redmayne, Robert Downey Jr. and Tobey Maguire all reached out expressing interest in the role.

One name on that list seemed a natural choice: Christian Bale. After DiCaprio was definitively out, Bale became the primary choice and negotiations began with the star in earnest in early October.

Publications, including *Mashable*, noted how similar Bale looked to Jobs. It felt right.

The budget and the financing



Producer Scott Rudin, Sony Pictures Entertainment co-chairman Amy Pascal and Chairman and CEO of Sony Pictures Entertainment Michael Lynton.

Throughout the search for a lead actor for the film, Sony struggled to get a solid budget for the film and to find co-financing to get the film made.

Originally targeted for release in 2015, *Jobs* was pushed to 2016 in most internal targets by October of this year. Without a star, financing or a budget, it seemed unlikely the film would make its original debut.

The budget is something Sony struggled with almost from the beginning. During early discussions with Fincher, the budget's goal was \$33.5 to \$35 million. Fincher wanted the budget expanded to \$45 million or higher.

When DiCaprio seemed likely as the lead, some budget projections even ventured into the \$50 to \$55 million range.

When DiCaprio seemed likely as the lead, some budget projections even ventured into the \$50 to \$55 million range. That's not an outlandish number in today's Hollywood, but for a film that is virtually a stage play with very little exterior shooting, Sony management was keen on keeping the budget smaller.

That's in part because of the precarious financial condition of Sony Pictures, as well as its parent company, Sony Corporation. The electronics arm of Sony is in disarray and its studio division, Sony Pictures, isn't doing much better.

Sony had a particularly rough summer 2013 when both *White House Down* and *After Earth* bombed at the box office. In the fall of 2013, Wall Street raider Daniel Loeb started buying up shares in Sony and using his perch to pressure the suits in Tokyo to sell or spin-off the studio.

In part because of Loeb's pressures, Sony CEO Kazuo Hirai announced \$250 million in operational cuts, with many coming from the film studio.

Fortunately, director Boyle has a reputation for staying within his budgets and shooting quickly, so keeping him on track wasn't a problem. With no DiCaprio, Sony went back down to a \$33-\$35 million budget projection — with some optimistic estimates as low as \$25 million.

Part of the reason the budget became such a concern was because of financing. Sony needed help getting the film co-financed. The problem with co-financing, especially on a film like *Jobs* where many of the talent deals are awarded on the back end with points rather than upfront salaries, is that more investors involved means that Sony's share in the profits is much lower.

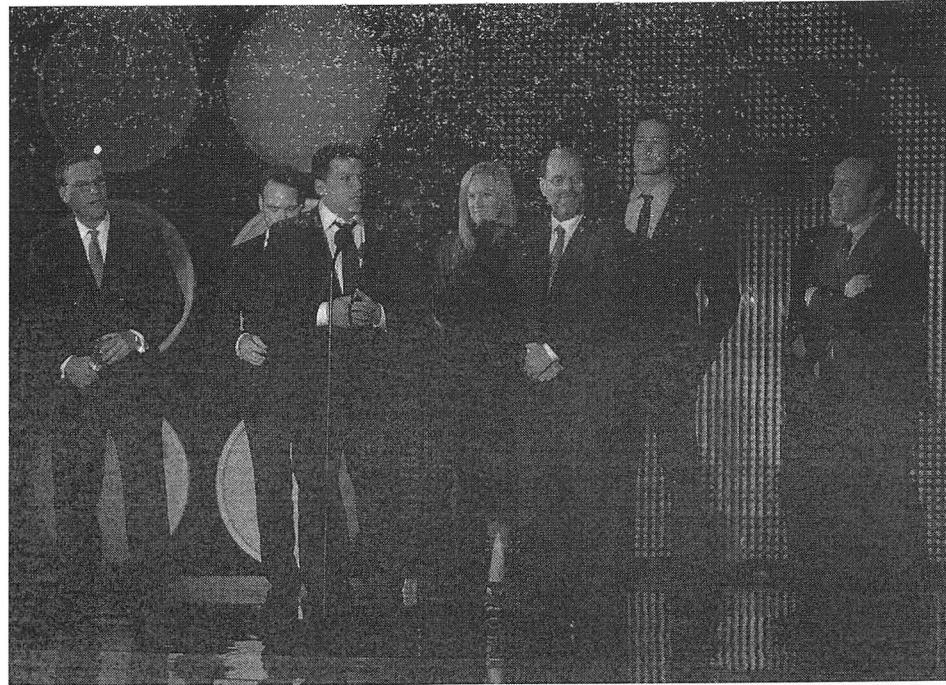
Sony's internal budget projections as of Nov. 4, 2014, showed that *Jobs* would need to make \$130 million at the box office to hit all of its targets and achieve a 7% margin, and that was on a \$33 million budget.

Financing merry-go-round

Hollywood accounting can be complex, but put simply, trying to make everything work in a budget that stays in the black for the major studio is always the end goal.

Sony could have fully financed the film itself (and that was one of the options the studio was mulling over), but it seemed apparent to the studio and Rudin that they would need to

co-finance the film or at least take on partners for the international release in order to minimize the risk.



Writer Aaron Sorkin, producers Dana Brunetti, Michael De Luca, Cean Chaffin and Scott Rudin, actor Armie Hammer, actor Andrew Garfield, actor Jesse Eisenberg, and producer Kevin Spacey onstage during the 16th Annual Critics' Choice Movie Awards.

IMAGE: MICHAEL CAULFIELD/WIREIMAGE

An email — sent to Pascal, Belgrad, De Luca and president of worldwide business affairs and operations for Columbia Pictures Andrew Gumpert — lays it all out:

Scott is already dug in that beyond the 50pts, the talent needs fresh cash/non-app bonuses at around 130wwbo (50pts is a lot of money in success and that should be it). The fact that folks have gross quotes is not really relevant since the 50pt pool makes up for that. I'm not doing any of this (nor would our financiers), and Scott thinks we should stop the whole thing, and I agree if that is their position. This is easy if they want it to be or not. But let's not get sucked into the rabbit hole.

I feel like if this is how Scott feels, we should go back to letting him get the financing and we will distribute for fees and he can pay the talent and himself whatever he wants if his financiers will allow him to do so.

My view is this is a de-facto negative pickup:

33m net (fyi that budget assumes Walter I defers 2m. Ba has not spoken to his reps about this, and I'm not sure if he'll do it or on what terms, eg, does walter have to go into the 50pt pool??)

They are on for overages

50pt pool

3p financing in place.

Simple/easy if they want it to be.

In other words, Sony could do the full financing at a \$33 million budget, provided the talent agree to take most of their salaries on back-end profit points (which account for 50% of the film's profits). That would require at least \$130 million total box office to be worth Sony's while.

The problem, for Rudin and his producers, was that the salaries for talent weren't as generous as some would have liked. The alternative, from Sony's perspective, was for Rudin to find others to finance the project and Sony could simply act as the distributor and collect fees from it that way.

The problem was finding a studio to agree to co-finance.

The savior?

Enter Megan Ellison, founder of Annapurna Pictures. Ellison reached out to Amy Pascal in mid-October 2014 asking to be involved in the film. Ellison, the daughter of Oracle founder (and Steve Jobs's best friend) Larry Ellison, worked with Sony on *American Hustle*.

In emails between Pascal and Rudin, Rudin initially rejected the idea of having Ellison involved in the film, apparently because of a problem the two had on a previous project.

On Oct. 17, 2014, Ellison sent Rudin an email begging to be involved in the project as a producing or financing partner. It said in part:

And I would love to explain the reason why the Steve Jobs project is so important to me too. Steve Jobs was and always will be an important part of my family. He was my father's best friend, he was the witness at his wedding, he is the only person my father has ever truly admired. So this is also incredibly personal for me. It would be a great joy to be a part of shepherding his story.

I'm not looking to infringe on your territory. I'm not power hungry or an ego maniac. I just love films and this film in particular. I'd love the opportunity to be a part of it and I want to see how you work. No bullshit, I've looked up to you forever, since as long as I can remember. I hope this you well.

Internally, the executives at Sony saw Ellison's overtures as a win for the project. She could help provide some of the needed financing and the studio could move forward in getting deals locked down on a budget, locations and actors.

For his part, Rudin was not impressed.

His response to Ellison's email to Pascal was that "I'm not interested in financing partners who bring this amount of emotion to it and frankly the notion of selling her this to get the other one done is kind of gross."

His response to Ellison herself was more measured, but was still uninterested in budging. Pascal tried to intervene on Ellison's behalf but Rudin seemed undeterred.

Still, at this stage, it seemed obvious Ellison wanted to be involved and Sony was trying to make something work with Annapurna and the *Jobs* film.

The collapse

On Oct. 16, 2014, Gumpert (aka "Gump"), sent an outline of the budget and back-end deal and points breakdown to Scott Rudin. It was then pushed out to the various talent representatives on Oct. 18, 2014.

Rudin's initial response to the offer was hostile. "Just to say this: asking any of us to post one cent for overages out of our fixed comp is about as offensive an ask as I have ever seen. I think if you include that in the proposal the movie will go away. Nobody needs to make a movie this badly — at least nobody in this group — to be raped in the process."

Pascal tried to defer a conversation until after the weekend, to which Rudin responded:

"You have NO risk in the movie but WE should have risk? You lay off every cent except what you choose to keep and WE should then also fund you — that's how this should work? I cannot believe you're serious. What idiot would make this deal? The presumption that five Oscar winners would be desperate enough to give up all value for their services and then also risk the baseline bargain-basement fees on top of it is beyond comprehension. Every single movie like this that we have made for you has worked. And you think this is fair?"

At this point, Rudin brought Ari Emanuel into the email chain. Emanuel, who was the basis for the Ari Gold character on *Entourage*, was explicit.

"This offer is fucking bull shit. Give us the movie back. You you guys in the business. No other studio would even ask for this. Pass"

In response to Pascal's plea to deal with things on Monday, Emanuel responds again:

"Whatever

You guys ask us to find financing. Scott, Patrick and myself get Modi [an investor] and we still get no respect. Amy, this is not what you want to hear - but this NEVER happens and any other studio. In fact they then would go out of their way to make a proper deal. Even Harvey."

Pascal responded again, trying to lessen tensions writing in part, "don't make it harder than it is."

The response to Rudin and Emanuel's reaction from the others at Sony was that of shock, dismay and incredulity.

To De Luca and Pascal, Belgrad noted, "Michael bought this book not Scott or Danny and we are well within our rights trying to do this responsibly.

We do not need this movie and we do not need to give it back to them."

After the weekend had passed, both sides seemed more calm, but it appears it was dawning on Sony that there would be a very real chance that the film may not be made at their studio.

In a message authored by Gumpert and sent to Stefan Litt, the EVP and CFO of Columbia TriStar, the situation was summed up like this:

1. "The only way to get this to net neutral is to have 100% of it financed and backstopped (a la zero dark 30).
2. If we want 1/3 ish of the film, then the in year negative can be reduced from 37.4M to 17.1m, but that is still a big in year negative.

I hate to say it, but our real options are:

1. Release in 2016 (fy 17) where we can plan for this better
2. Release in 2015, BUT only do it as a distribution/backstop deal..."

Meanwhile, Village Roadshow and MRC both declined to co-finance the production.

Then, on Oct 30, 2014, Christian Bale dropped out of the film.

In an email to CEO Lynton, Pascal commented on the "funny" nature of the drop-outs:

"Do you think actors are afraid to play this character

Danny and I were musing about this yesterday"

Lynton's response was interesting:

"or mrs jobs is calling them...."

In Hollywood circles, there have been rumblings for quite some time that the family of Steve Jobs is unhappy with the *Jobs* project at Sony. In an email to De Luca and Belgrad, Pascal appears to take Lynton's suggestion that Jobs' widow, Laurene, intentionally sabotaging the film seriously:

"This is the second actor that pulled out....do you think there is some fears bout playing jobs? Or calls from the mrs?"

Trying to save the project



Amy Pascal, co-chairman, Sony Pictures Entertainment, and actor Jonah Hill.

IMAGE: KEVIN WINTER/GETTY IMAGES

With financing not forthcoming, a budget nonexistent and the second lead actor to drop out, *Jobs* was clearly in trouble by Halloween. Still, outside of Sony, the news that Bale had exited the project led to yet another deluge of actors and agents expressing interest.

Sorkin even had the idea to approach Tom Cruise

Sorkin even had the idea to approach Tom Cruise, citing his work in *Lions for Lambs* as proof that the actor could play the younger Jobs part with aplomb.

Still, by Nov. 3, 2014, director Danny Boyle was sold on signing Michael Fassbender to the role. Though all creative and business parties involved with the film seemed to emphatically trust Boyle's judgment, the tenor within emails was that Fassbender didn't seem to be the right fit for the part.

The news of Fassbender's attachment and interest in the project spread to *Deadline* on Nov. 4. At this point, Rudin, Sorkin, Pascal and Belgrad all seemed to be trying to talk themselves into seeing Fassbender in the role.

Meanwhile, Andrew Gumpert came back with alternatives for the studio for making the film, including a number of scenarios where Sony would co-finance with Annapurna Pictures. With Fassbender as the lead, the budget for the film would now be lower.

Complicating matters further, Leonardo DiCaprio's representative reappeared and showed potential interest in bringing the actor back into discussion.

At this point, Sony started creating two different versions/budgets for the film — one with DiCaprio and one with Fassbender — for potential co-financing with Annapurna Pictures.

The disintegration

On Nov. 13, 2014, Megan Ellison and Annapurna backed out of the project. In less than a month, Ellison went from literally begging to be involved in the project in any way possible to writing, "I'm having a hard time moving forward on *Jobs*. I can't help but not feel great about the way things played out until now and the level of investment has only become much more significant."

In a long missive to Belgrad, De Luca and Minghella, Pascal outlines the massive problems shaping up around *Jobs*:

"We got positioned on jobs

Danny wants mf

Danny wants Cali

Danny wants his rehearsal period

We got totally positioned because the actor we didn't want has another movie he has to do so we are rushing into production with an actor we don't want and have no financing

Mrc passed

Megan passed

Village road show passed
Lone star will probably pass
New regency passed (tonight
)I love the script but I can't do this to the company
We should figure out if we can stomach giving it to them in ta
Tomorrow for a week with mf at 33.4
I was told by a birdie that searchlight would pass
But then the person who told me that send maybe they wouldn't
I also found out that when we were trying to make Fincher deal it was sent around to
every studio and people even passed in that"

On Nov. 15, Pascal sent an email to Scott Rudin explaining her discomfort with the current situation regarding the film. The email makes it clear Sony is looking at dropping out of the project.

In response, Rudin sends Pascal an impassioned plea arguing for the merits of the project, the script, the source material, and even appeals to Pascal's heart as a film executive.

Pascal responded laying out the issues with the film. Her response also touched on some of the other controversies of the film, including Jobs' widow's reaction ("we are sonythe company apple put out of biz") and her lack of comfort going forward without financial protection.

The end

At this point, on Nov. 17, it's clear *Jobs* will be going into turnaround, when a project is sold from one studio to another for development costs. According to an email from De Luca to Pascal, Rudin was suspicious that the film went into turnaround "too easily" and that "maybe that signified Lynton bowing to jobs family pressure too."

Two days later, on Nov. 19, after Fox Searchlight failed to pick up the option, Sony had another chance to go back to the project. The same day, news broke that Sony was dropping out of the project and that it may be heading to Universal.

Pascal and Rudin exchanged strained emails with one another as the deal finally fell apart. Even at the end, Pascal still seemed to be trying to figure out how to still work on the project. That night, she sent Rudin an impassioned plea, opening up about everything she was feeling about the film.

I want you to think about something and we can talk in the morning.
I put u and the movie in a vulnerable position
I was trying to do anything humanly possible to keep the movie
And I wasn't getting it done
You are I were still talking to respective people as of this am
Yes it did take losing the movie to shock me into the realization that I would do anything
to make the movie with you and for whatever reason that got it done
Am I proud of that
No I'm not

But did it shock my system into action yes it did
I made a decision
Maybe one I could have made all along if I drown out all the noise
I will not blow your deal at universal but you have to admit we gave you a verbal turn
around in a very short window
Without even going through the normal process
I was responding to Danny and you and ari and the desire to start now....
I hated it but I did the honorable thing
As late as this am you said you were gonna call michael
And we talked about the movie
When Danny or Robert or whoever called to set that meeting I thought I had a shot
Did I take one more chance at Leo Yesyou know why
Cuz it would have made things easy
When I actually heard Danny talk about the movie for almost the very first time I
understood Cupertino and mf
And everything else
And told him I was blown away
I'm sorry he felt the meeting had gone so terribly
I heard myself saying now I understand all
Should I have said done
We are a go
We are paying
Yea I wish I had
But I it was the begining of my
Realization
When I talked to you and Sri this am we were sittingat the table trying to figure out how
to just move forward
And then I made a decision
Albeit a bit late
And decided we had to have the movie and I wasn't behaving like the person I am
Yes you told me that over the weekend
So did Ari
You guys tried
A lot
I'm not saying you didn't
Both of you
But it happened. As you all were closing with universal
I really would really to stay involved with the movie taking the international seemed like a
good way to do that
I know universal won't want to do it. Why would they
But you could tell them we were pretty cool about the way we gave you the turnaround
and you'd like it to go to us

I don't think Danny is angry with us in the way you suggested I m not sure he is saying he will never work with us againBut I also know he will never go against what you want to do...

I know Aaron doesn't feel like we fucked you guys and neither does mark or Guymon We still wanted to make the movie and kept trying even though we let you try and make it elsewhere

But let's be honest we all know who has the power here

If it's possible why can't we do it?

Are you sure those guys would actually object to us being passive partners in the movie?

It would be great

It would be amazing

Why can't we try to turn this into something good for everyone

I'm sorry for all of today's conversations and a bunch of other stuff

We have been doing this together al long time

You don't owe me anything

I'm not invoking a friendship or a partnership I'm I just saying it would be excellent if you helped me make it happen

I made a mistake

Does it have to be fatal?

Talk in am

Amy

In an email to Tom Rothman, the chairman of the relaunched TriStar Productions, Pascal summed up her discomfort with letting *Jobs* go in terms that were nothing short of epic.

"i feel like i just gave away a seminal movie

like citizen kane for our time. what is

happening to me

everyone you included

said just do it. i already think i may have made

one of the worst decisions of my career...but

i hope the the walk played great...."

Pascal was in better spirits the next day, responding to a message from Rothman checking in on her status.

"I'm great

I had enough of everyone

I'm done with all of it

The classiest among them all turns out to be

Aaron Sorkin.

I didn't need Columbia to be some poor cousin

To this movie....that would have felt worse than not doing it. I know Danny will make a great movie. I'll have another chance to work with him some day.

And my word is all I have

I wish it had all been different

But it's different now
And I'm without jobs but much wiser"

The epilogue

On November 24, 2014, Universal Pictures officially stepped in to pick up the Steve Jobs film.

Danny Boyle is still directing Aaron Sorkin's script and Michael Fassbender is attached to star in the film, which remains produced by Scott Rudin, Mark Gordon and Guymon Casady.

Also on Nov. 24, Sony Pictures' internal network was the victim of what is quickly becoming the biggest corporate hack in history.

TOPICS: ENTERTAINMENT, MOVIES, SONY, SONY HACK, SONY PICTURES, STEVE JOBS